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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Radio Service

OFFICE OF INFORMATION

HOMEMAKERS' CHAT

Tuesday, November 1, 1938

(FOR BROADCAST USE ONLY)

Subject: "QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS." Information from the Office of Experiment Stations, United States Department of Agriculture.

--ooOoo--

No use trying to come out of the kitchen, listeners -- not while cooking questions keep on coming in. So let's go for answers to the kitchens -- pardon, to the foods laboratories of several State experiment stations.

The listener who asks a question about smoke and doughnut-frying gets an answer from Belle Lowe of the Iowa station. This listener asks: "When the kettle of lard is hot enough to smoke, is it sure to be the right temperature for frying doughnuts?"

"No," Miss Lowe says, very emphatically. Smoke may be a good guide to a forest fire but it's a poor guide for the doughnut-maker. The only way to be sure of the right temperature is to use a fat thermometer. By the time lard or any other fat becomes hot enough to smoke, it has begun to decompose or break down chemically. It darkens in color; its flavor becomes unpleasant; and it is less digestible. Scorching can ruin fat. And smoking is an indication of scorching. So Miss Lowe says to use a moderately deep heavy kettle for deep frying and always depend on a thermometer for the temperature. She also cautions against letting the gas flame climb too high up the side of the kettle. This may scorch the fat at the surface.

Here's another question about frying which brings another answer from Miss Lowe: "Will you tell me how I can remove very tiny bits of food from frying fat? I mean those so small they go right through the cheesecloth strainer and then burn and blacken in the fat when I try to use it next time?"

Miss Lowe suggests 2 methods for clarifying fat of these tiny particles that are too small to strain out. One is the good old-fashioned method of putting slices of raw potato into the cold fat and then heating the fat gradually until the potato slices are well browned. Remove them by straining. The tiny particles adhere to the potato. Another method is clarifying by hot water. Cool the fat to a temperature below 200 degrees Fahrenheit and sprinkle the surface with hot water. (Be sure the fat has gone down to 200 or below; otherwise it will spatter badly when you add the hot water.) Use 2 tablespoons of hot water to each 4 cups of fat. As water is heavier than fat, it will go through to the bottom of the kettle carrying the fine particles with it.

Now to answer the lady who says she has no luck in cooking sausage. She likes sausage that is cooked to a light golden-brown color; has a thin crust; and is tender, juicy and well-done. But, alas, the sausage she cooks comes out hard and dark, or else raw inside.

Answer: The trouble is probably cooking sausage over too hot a fire. For information on cooking sausage, I'll refer you to Alice Childs of the Minnesota Station. She says that slow cooking at mocerate temperature is the best rule for cooking sausage. Slow cooking allows the meat to get done inside before a heavy dark crust is formed on the surface. Also slow cooking keeps the sausage from shrinking too much.

Miss Childs suggests 3 good ways to cook link sausage. One is to place the links in a cold frying pan with 2 tablespoons of water. Heat slowly until the water evaporates and turn the links 2 or 3 times as they heat. Then fry them for about 15 minutes, pouring off the grease from time to time. If you turn them with a spatula or knife, that will help keep the skins from cracking.

The second method is to roll the links in flour and then put them in a cold frying pan. Fry very slowly for about 15 minutes, turning often and pouring off the grease when necessary.

Third method. Place the sausage in a cold pan, cover with cold water, bring to a boil and then pour off the liquid. Fry slowly for 15 minutes, turning slowly and pouring off the grease occasionally.

Please note, listeners, that in cooking link sausage, Miss Childs always advises starting with a cold pan. However, in cooking sausage patties she uses a heated pan. But whether it is links or patties, she advises turning often and pouring off the grease. Sausage patties, if they are only a half inch thick, will cook in the frying pan in 8 minutes, but linked sausages take about 20 minutes.

The third question this week is about potatoes. A listener reports that potatoes which look perfectly white when they are raw become a greenish grey in cooking. She wants to know why and what to do to prevent this unpleasant change in color.

That question we have referred to Mrs. Marion Sweetman of the State of Maine. And she says this: "One undesirable change in color during cooking is the development of a greenish grey or yellowish tint which is due to the action of iron from the kettle, or to alkali from the water the potato is cooked in." She says you can prevent this discoloration by not using iron utensils in cooking--and that includes enamelware that has chipped to expose the iron. If you must cook in hard water, add a little vinegar to the water.

Last question. "Is sauer kraut as rich in vitamin C as fresh raw cabbage?"

No, but the New York Station still finds kraut a very good source of this vitamin. Workers at this station report that freshly fermented kraut, if properly canned, contains about two-thirds as much vitamin C as the original cabbage. So kraut may be of considerable value especially in winter diets where vitamin C is likely to be low.

And that's all the questions for today.

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